

A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT THE

AFRICAN MEETING-HOUSE, IN BOSTON,

July 14, 1808,

IN

GRATEFUL CELEBRATION

OF THE

Abolition of the African Slave-Trade,

BY THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE

United States, Great Britain and Denmark.

BY JEDIDIAH MORSE, D. D.
Pastor of the Congregational Church in Charlestown.

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THE following discourse was written, preached, and published at the request of the Africans and their descendants in Boston, amounting to about *twelve hundred* souls, among whom originated the proposal of keeping a day of Thanksgiving in commemoration of the *Abolition of the Slave Trade*. A number of gentlemen, who had for several years past supported and patronized a school for the children of these Africans, and who were applied to for the purpose, favoured the pious design, and pledged their aid and countenance in carrying it into effect. With the express approbation of his Excellency, Gov. SULLIVAN, and the SELECTMEN of Boston, about *two hundred* people of colour marched in procession, through several streets, to the African meeting house, where divine service was performed, in presence of a full and devout assembly; among whom were a number of the clergy and laity of the neighbouring towns. The religious services, beside the sermon, were performed by the Rev. Mr. BLOOD, Rev. Mr. CHANNING, and Mr. CODMAN. The music, prepared and performed principally by the people of colour, was appropriate and excellent. The religious exercises, and the subsequent festivities of the day, were attended and conducted with a degree of seriousness, sobriety, order and decency, highly creditable to these Africans.

At the close of divine service a collection was made for the benefit of their poor, whose numbers and necessities are not small; for which purpose also, any profits, which may arise from the sale of this discourse, are devoted.

Boston, July 15, 1808.

AT a meeting of the Committee of the Africans and descendants of Africans in Boston,

Voted—That Fortune Symmes, Peter Gust and Cyrus Vassall, be a committee to wait on the Rev. Dr. MORSE, and in the name of “The African Society,” to thank him for his Discourse delivered before them, at their request, on the Subject of the “Abolition of the Slave-Trade,” and request a copy for the press.

CYRUS VASSALL, *Secretary.*

A

DISCOURSE.

INTRODUCTION.

"GOD, who made the world, hath made of *one blood* all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth ; and hath determined the bounds of their habitations."* The doctrine, that God "created different kinds of men at first, according to the nature of the climate in which they were to live"† is as contrary to sound philosophy, as to scripture. Our civil constitutions recognize the doctrine, that "All men are born free and equal, and have certain natural, essential, and unalienable rights ; among which are the right of enjoying and defending their rights and liberties ; that of acquiring, possessing, and protecting property ; and that comprehensive one of seeking and obtaining their safety and happiness."‡ In accordance with this doctrine, slavery is with consistency abolished by the Constitution of this Commonwealth. This doctrine, of the freedom and equality of men, however, is not to be so construed, as to militate with that order and subordination in society,

* Acts xvii. 26.

† See Lord Kaims' Discourse on the original diversity of mankind, and President Smith's Strictures upon it.

‡ Constitution of Massachusetts.

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which is indispensable to its peace, nay, to its very existence.

"Order is heaven's first law, and this confess,
"Some are and must be greater than the rest."

Distinctions of rank and condition in life are requisite to the perfection of the social state. There must be rulers and subjects, masters and servants, rich and poor. The human body is not perfect without all its members, some of which are more honourable than others ; so it is with the body politic. There is nevertheless a kind of equality among the members : all are free ; all are useful and necessary ; all are to be regarded and honoured according to their station and use.

But notwithstanding all men are thus made of one blood, and are born free and equal, there does in fact exist a great diversity, not only in their complexion, but also in their civil, social, moral, and religious state. This diversity is occasioned by a variety of co-operating causes, originating from the fall of man, and strengthened by the wickedness, which over-spreads the world. In the wisdom of that infinite Being, who "causeth the wrath of man to praise him ; who maketh poor, and maketh rich ; who bringeth low, and lifteth up ;" this diversity in the conditions of men is made subservient to his glory, and their ultimate benefit. The world is governed by its all wise Creator, in a manner suited to its fallen condition.

From the early ages of the world slavery, in some form, and in different degrees of severity, has existed among men. It is recognized and wisely restrained and regulated in the laws of Moses. It was practised in Greece, and also among the Romans, even in the Augustan age, with shock-

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ing inhumanity.* It has been practised by several nations, whose slaves have been the unoffending natives of Africa, forced from their beloved homes, and all that was dear to them in this life, by mercenaries employed for the inhuman purpose. But wherever slavery exists, and this species of it especially, it indicates a corrupt state of society, and mars the beauty of the body politic. It thrives only on the vices of mankind. It cannot subsist in a pure and wholesome state of society. Its abolition, therefore, by any community, who have long supported and encouraged it, indicates returning health in that community, and furnishes just ground for rejoicing. Every step toward such an event gladdens the heart of the christian philanthropist.

Measures of vast magnitude, and extensive influence, having for their object the gradual and ultimate extinction of African slavery, we are invited this day gratefully to recognize and commemorate. Within a short period, three powerful nations, Great Britain, Denmark, and the United States of America, all for many years deeply concerned in the *African slave trade*, have agreed to its abolition. In Great Britain, this grand measure, so interesting to the friends of justice, humanity and religion, and so honorary to the laborious and persevering exertions of Mr. Wilberforce, was effected on the 25th of March, 1807; and in consequence, a day of Thanksgiving was celebrated, by the pious friends of this measure, in the following June.† About the same time a similar measure was adopted by the government of Denmark. In

* Notes on Virginia, p. 235, 236, London Edition.

† See Note (A.)

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the United States, their Constitution of 1789 provided, that this traffic in human flesh might be abolished in 1808; and a law of Congress, passed in the winter of 1806—7 at the recommendation of the President,* took prohibitory effect, in reference to this traffic, the first day of the present year.

These are the events, which have led to the appointment of this day of public religious Thanksgiving to God, by those of you, who from your past experience can feel for your African brethren; and we are invited to assist in the good work. We cannot but commend your piety to God, and the deep interest you take in what so nearly concerns the happiness of millions of your kindred in Africa. Cheerfully and cordially do we join with you in these religious services. These events cannot fail to fill every good man's heart, of whatever colour, rank or nation, with gratitude and joy. All must join in ascriptions of praise to God, who hath disposed the hearts of the rulers of these nations to abolish a traffic, so incompatible with the laws of our religion, and so disgraceful to humanity. We therefore highly commend the appointment of this day to be spent in religious joy and festivity, in commemoration of events so propitious to the hitherto unhappy tribes of Africa, and to the prosperity of the three nations, who have at length been persuaded to be just to this much injured part of their fellowmen. Gladly shall I contribute all in my power to turn these exercises to the social, moral, and especially to the religious advantage, of all present; of those particularly by whose invitation we are now assembled. For this purpose I shall invite

* See Note (B.)

your attention to the declaration of our blessed Sa-
viour, recorded in the gospel according to

JOHN ch. viii. v. 36.

IF THE SON THEREFORE SHALL MAKE YOU
FREE, YE SHALL BE FREE INDEED.

THE world lieth in wickedness, and is subjected to a great variety of evils, both natural and moral. Man, who ought to be the friend of man, is his enemy and oppressor. One half of the human race, probably a much greater proportion, are in bondage of one kind or another, to the rest. Crimes, captivity, and debt, subject many to the absolute control of others. The slavery which originates from these causes is deemed consistent with the law of nature; but should always cease when the laws, which authorise it in these several cases, are satisfied.* The conquerors and tyrants of the earth, in violation of the laws of nature and of God, hold millions more in subjection to their will. There is another species of slavery, still more degrading to human nature, more offensive to God, and detestable in the sight of good men; it is that which makes the unoffending inhabitants of one country, together with their posterity, not only the servants, but the *property* of the inhabitants of another country; and this for no better reason, than to gratify their sloth, ambition, and avarice. In this kind of slavery, thousands upon thousands of our African brethren, and their descendants, have for a long succession of years been annually involved. But the worst species of slavery, the most debasing to human

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* Paley's Philosophy. Art. Slavery.

nature, and the most abominable in the sight of God, is yet to be mentioned—it is the slavery of sin. Every other species of slavery respects the body only. The soul is left free. This divine principle man cannot enslave. But the slavery of sin reaches the soul, as well as the body, and subjects the whole man to the most degrading and fatal bondage. In this slavery, the whole human race, without a single exception, are by nature involved.

Such is the state of mankind. Millions are in different kinds of slavery to each other : All by nature are slaves to sin. In this most deplorable condition the benignant eye of God beheld our fallen race ; his bowels moved with compassion at the sight ; he sent his only begotten Son to redeem them ; investing him with power to make and to pronounce them free. And whosoever he maketh free, is free indeed.

Let us contemplate the joys of freedom. The unfortunate *debtor*, unable to satisfy the demands of his creditors, is constrained to resign his liberty, and to close his doors. His prospects of worldly enjoyment vanish. Instead of plenty and joy in his once happy family are poverty, sadness, and weeping. He relinquishes his pleasant mansion, and all that appertained to it, to other owners ; and retires to an humbler dwelling, not his own,—perhaps to a prison. Mortifying change ! But his creditors are merciful men. They speak kindly to him. They restore him to liberty ; to credit and reputation ; to useful employment : shall I add, to life. To such a man, how grateful are the blessings of freedom !

Behold the *criminal*, whom justice sentences to confinement and labour, torn from a family whose affic-

tions are deepened by disgrace, and carried to prison. See him stripped of his usual apparel, and clad in garments, which continually remind him of his crime and degradation. See him sad and pale in the solitary cell, separated from society, and left to fulfil the painful duty of reflecting on his past life. Follow him into the workshop, among his companions in crime and suffering. Slow and tedious pass the days of his punishment. At length they expire ; the law is satisfied ; the prison doors are opened, and he is once more a free man. Still more, he is a penitent, and Christ hath made him free indeed. His heart leaps for joy. He has felt, that “the way of transgressors is hard.” He values more than ever, the blessings of society and freedom.

Think of the *captive* in a foreign land, far removed from all his relations and friends ; perhaps among barbarians, in chains, at hard labour, or in a loathsome prison. He groans, and sighs, and weeps in secret ; he has none to pity him. He feels the sickness, which arises from *hope deferred*.* But he is not forgotten by HIM, who heareth “the groaning of the prisoner, and who looseth those who are appointed unto death.”† His ransom is received. His liberty is proclaimed. He returns to his native land ; to the embraces of his friends. Who can describe their joys ?

Turn your attention to a more affecting scene. How shall I describe it ? When I contemplate it my heart revolts ; my hand trembles. What do I behold ! A traffic in human bodies and human souls ! And this traffic carried on year after year, century after century, by the countenance and authority (I blush while I declare it) of *Christian* nations ! ! Yes, CHRISTIAN

* Prov. xiii. 12.

† Psa. cii. 20.

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nations ; nations too, boasting their love of freedom, and ready to shed the last drop of their blood for its protection !! What inconsistency ! What a reproach to the Christian name and profession !

Imagine the arrival of a *slave ship*, on the African coast, fitted by the ingenuity of wicked men, for the abominable traffic, with all her horrid implements on board. The first act of the merciless officers is to excite the unoffending natives to “ war and depredation for the sake of supplying their contracts, or furnishing the market with slaves.” This is but the beginning of wickedness. Next, the unhappy, agonizing slaves, “ torn away from parents, wives, children, from their friends and companions, their fields and flocks, their home and country,” are hurried on ship-board, loaded with irons, crowded together, and with accommodations less convenient, than are usually provided for brutes, transported to a far distant land, without hope of return. “ This is the second stage of cruelty ; from which the wretched exiles are delivered only to be placed, and that for life, in subjection to a dominion and system of laws, the most merciless and tyrannical, that were ever tolerated upon the face of the earth ; and executed by the English slave-holder, especially, with rigour and brutality.”* I leave to imagination to paint the cruelties, the enormities, endured by the poor slaves, under such laws, in the hands of such masters. Oh slavery, if in thy best disguise, thy mildest form, “ thou art a bitter draught,” how bitter must thou be in the form now before us !—“ Can the liberties of a nation”—I now use the language of Mr. JEFFERSON, who from his youth has

* Paley's Philosophy, p. 160. Eng. Edit. Art. Slavery.

been a witness of the evils and wickedness of African slavery—"Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure, when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people, that these liberties are the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with his wrath?" Indeed I tremble for my country," (and well might all concerned in this detestable traffic tremble with him) "when I reflect, that God is just, and that his justice cannot sleep forever."* But praised be God, the uplifted arm of Almighty vengeance has been arrested. The cries of these slaves have "entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth."† The prayers of the people of God have been answered. The long, honourable, and persevering labours and exertions of the opposers of this inhuman trade, have at length been crowned with success.‡ By three great nations, who have had the deepest share in it, it has been, within a short period, by law abolished.

Who can calculate the blessed effects, which these measures will gradually and ultimately produce?§ They immediately check the progress of a mighty and threatening evil. They will meliorate the condition of those, who are now, and who must remain, in slavery. They will tend to prevent wars, and promote harmony among the African tribes. They will lead good men to devise and execute plans for the commercial, moral, and religious benefit of these injured people, wherever residing, whether in their native, or in a foreign country.¶ And what is more than all the rest, they tend to prevent the wrath of Heaven from being poured out on millions involved in the guilt of this traffic. These are the measures, our Af-

* Notes on Virginia, p. 272, Eng. Edition.

† James v. 4. ‡ See Note (C.) § See Note (D.) ¶ See Note (E.)

rican friends, which this day fill your hearts with joy and gladness. If they do not not accomplish all that your sympathizing hearts could wish, for those of your brethren now in bondage ; yet they will do much even for *them* ; and they will prevent thousands now living in your native Africa, and millions yet unborn, from being cruelly plunged into that servitude, from which you have been emancipated, and in which such unnumbered multitudes of your race and colour are still involved.

But shall Africans alone be found giving thanks to God for these great events ? Are they more interested in them than the White inhabitants of our country ? No, surely. "Lo, oh Lord, *we* have sinned, and have done wickedly ; but *these sheep*, what have *they* done?"* Yet they are leading the way in those religious exercises, in which *we* should have set *them* the example. Will not *He*, who was "anointed to proclaim liberty to the captives," ask—(if we may be allowed thus to accommodate the passage,) "Were there not ten lepers cleansed ? but where are the nine ? There were not found that returned to give glory to God, save *this stranger*."†

But we are now to contemplate a far more interesting picture ; a slavery of vastly deeper misery ; a freedom of infinitely richer value. The slavery of sin is beyond all comparison worse than any conceivable state of earthly bondage ; the freedom from it, which Christ bestows, is unspeakably superior to what the greatest earthly potentate can confer. In this slavery, not here and there an individual only, not the criminals, who fill our prisons, nor an unfortunate, subjugated

* 2 Sam. xxiv. 17.

† Luke xvii. 17, 18.

ted nation only, are involved ; but the whole race of Adam. This slavery, which I shall not attempt minutely to describe, essentially consists in the dominion of sin and Satan in the soul ; or that alienation from God, and opposition of heart to him and his government, which possess the bosom of every impenitent sinner. It is a property of this slavery, that its miseries are generally but slightly felt, and its dangers little regarded in this life. Sinners, till awakened by the Divine Spirit, love their sins, and hug their chains. They are the willing and cheerful servants of Satan. It is their delight to do his will. But let the veil be once taken from their eyes ; give them a full view of their character and danger ; let "the arrows of the Almighty be within them, and the poison thereof drink up their spirit ; and the terrors of the Lord set themselves in array against them ;" * then will they perceive and feel the misery of their bondage, and sigh for freedom. Then will the voice of Christ, which calls them to liberty and life, be listened to with eagerness. They will feel, that if the Son of God will but make them free, they shall be free indeed.

Let us dwell a moment on the blessedness and joys of this freedom. Over the happy subjects of it, sin has no longer dominion. Freed from sin, they have become the servants of righteousness. Satan no longer leads them captive at his will. Being purified from dead works to serve the living God, conscience has ceased to be the enemy of their peace. Being redeemed from the curse of the law, by the precious blood of Christ, they are delivered from the fears of hell. From these immense, overwhelming evils, are they liberated.

* Job vi. 4.

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But the freedom, which Christ confers, includes positive privileges, and substantial delight. On this side heaven its happy subjects enjoy communion with God; calm serenity of soul; peace, which the world can neither give nor take away; joy, that passeth all understanding; comfort in all their afflictions; victory over all their spiritual enemies; the hope of the gospel, which is full of immortality. Fearless and undismayed, they can meet death in its most ghastly forms, and anticipate the awful, delightful period, when "the day of God shall come, in which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat;" "When the archangel shall lift his hand and swear, by him who liveth forever and ever, that time shall be no longer." Such are the privileges of those whom Christ maketh free, while they are inhabitants of this world.

But who can conceive their joys in heaven? The inspired writers thus describe them: "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."^{*} They shall "come to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant."[†] "They are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They

* Isa. xxxv. 10.

† Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24.

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shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”*

Such are the joys of civil freedom; such the joys of that which is spiritual and eternal. The former is to be valued among the first of earthly blessings; the latter, as the richest gift in the treasury of heaven. While, therefore, we rejoice in the momentous events which we this day celebrate, shall we not much more rejoice in the hope and prospect, that these events will prepare the way for the extensive spread of the glorious gospel among the African tribes, by which thousands, who are now in captivity to sin and Satan, shall be made free indeed?

You, who have invited us to join you in this joyful celebration, will this day recollect, with gratitude, the constitution of this commonwealth, which declares you freemen. Under many unavoidable disadvantages, you have experienced the blessings of liberty in such measure, as to make you sensible to the miseries of your brethren in slavery, and to rejoice in their emancipation. We commend your sympathy. We heartily join in your expressions of joy and gratitude to the Author of all good. But while contemplating the evils of slavery, we would not overlook the benefits, which that great and wise Being, who bringeth good out of evil, hath educated from it to the sufferers. Multitudes, by wicked hands indeed, brought from the darkness of paganism, to a christian land, and sub-

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* Rev. vii. 15, 16, 17.

jected to bondage in its most cruel forms, have had conferred on them by the Son of God a freedom, which infinitely overbalances all their sufferings. Some who hear me, I doubt not, can witness to the truth of what I have now said. As heaven is to be peopled by some out of all nations and languages under heaven, and probably some of every generation in each nation, it is remarkable, that while Africa lay enveloped in heathenish and Mahometan darkness, those who were to be made free in Christ, were brought, (though by the instrumentality of wicked men) to the light of his gospel, in christian countries. But since the blessed gospel now sheds its genial influence on Africa, by the preaching of the missionaries of the cross, its natives have no need to be carried to foreign lands, in order to enjoy its light; and God hath shut the door against their further transportation.

Great blessings, pertaining to this life, you also enjoy, of which I hope you are not insensible. Be ambitious to make the best use of your liberty and privileges. Make them not a cloke for licentiousness. Shew to those around you, that you are worthy to be free. Many eyes are upon you. Some doubtless are watching for your halting. Be contented in the humble station in which providence has placed you. By your decent, respectful, regular, industrious, quiet behaviour, authorize your friends still to shew themselves friendly. You know how deeply interested the Speaker feels, in whatever concerns your honour and best happiness in both worlds. Be particularly on your guard against excess in the joys and festivities of this day. Be sober, be temperate, be pious; so will you give pleasure to your friends, and silence opposition from your enemies.

While you set a just estimate on the liberty you enjoy, in this free country, and rejoice in the agreeable prospects of your brethren in Africa, oh forget not the freedom, which cometh from the Son of God. This is now offered you. It is precious beyond all estimation. Civil freedom, and all its attendant blessings, will avail you nothing without this. Embrace it without delay. Bid an everlasting adieu to the slavery of sin ; and stand fast in the liberty wherewith the Son of God makes his subjects free. In his heavenly kingdom all are united in the same honourable cause. To them there is neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free : but are all one in Christ, who is all, and in all. They are one in heart; engaged in the same cause, and pursue it, animated by one spirit. They feel how good, and how pleasant it is to dwell together in unity. In vain the adversary vents his impotent rage against these happy sons of freedom. No longer has he dominion over them. As you love true freedom, therefore, be persuaded to quit this worst species of slavery ; enlist under the Captain of the Lord's host ; under his banner fight the christian warfare ; you may be sure of victory ; and the invaluable liberty of the children of God shall be your rich and everlasting reward. For whom "the Son maketh free, shall be free indeed."

AMEN.

P R A Y E R.

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Altered from the Christian Observer.

O GRACIOUS God, who lookest down from heaven, the height of thy sanctuary, to hear the groaning of the prisoner, and to loose those that were appointed to death; we give thee hearty thanks that it has at length pleased thee to put a stop to the slave trade, the miseries of which have so long oppressed Africa, and the sin of which has so loudly cried to thee for vengeance upon Europe. Thou delightest in exercising loving kindness, righteousness, and judgment; and blessed be thy name for that spirit of benevolence, which thou hast implanted in the hearts of many, leading them to relieve the oppressed; that sense of right which has been awakened in our land; and that regard to justice which has led us to do to others in this instance, as we wish that they should do unto us. Cherish and prosper, O Lord, the good work which, we trust, thou hast begun. Pardon our accumulated and dreadful guilt, and enable us to repay to Africa that heavy debt which we have incurred by the wrongs we have done unto her. May our vessels now sail under thy protection, to bear thither, with a guiltless commerce, the blessings of peace and civilization, and the glad tidings of the gospel by Son. Give thy blessing to the endeavours used to promote this purpose, whether by individuals or societies. May their plans be formed with wisdom, executed with sound discretion and persevering zeal, and crowned by thee with signal success. Hasten the time, O Lord, when the Morian's land shall stretch out her hands unto thee. Pour down thy blessing also we pray thee on the southern states in the union, and may a spirit of justice and equity, of mercy and christian charity mitigate, and at length put an end to the bondage which still subsists there. Extend thy kindness to the other parts of our land, and may the light of thy truth, and the influence of thy peace and love, prevail more and more among all classes of its inhabitants. Put a stop to the ravages of war; disappoint the plans of ambitious and violent men; and may peace and happiness, religion and piety, every where abound. Visit with the light of thy gospel the nations which yet lie in darkness and the shadow of death. May idolatry, superstition, and impiety be banished from the face of the globe, and the earth be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Bless, O Lord, the President of the United States. Direct and prosper all the consultations of our rulers to the advancement of thy glory, the good of thy church, the safety, honour, and welfare of our country. And may every person through our land labour in his station to promote the good of his fellow creatures and the glory of thy holy name.

Finally, we pray thee to accept our unfeigned thanks for all the various privileges and mercies, civil and religious, which we enjoy. We bless thee that we have lived in a day when the cause of humanity and justice has so signally triumphed. Let it be the beginning of a new era in the world, when tyranny and oppression shall every where cease, and righteousness and peace be established throughout the earth. Hear these our prayers, we humbly beseech thee, most merciful Father, in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

NOTE S.

NOTE (A.) for page 7.

THE Abolition of the British slave trade, in an English periodical publication is thus announced: "This grand measure, so long desired by the friends of justice, humanity, and religion, and which crowns with triumph the laborious and persevering efforts of Mr. Wilberforce and others for many years past, received the sanction of royalty on March 25th, 1807: a day never to be forgotten in the annals of this free country! While we most sincerely congratulate our readers on this important event, we would wish to direct their thoughts to the great Ruler of the world, as the Author of every blessing, "from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed;" and to recommend the most devout acknowledgments to the Father of mercies."

THANKSGIVING.

"Many serious persons having expressed a desire that a particular day might be mentioned, on which those who conceive the Abolition of the Slave Trade to be a national blessing, may unite their praises with those of their fellow Christians in all parts of the kingdom, we have the pleasure to state, that it has been agreed by some very respectable persons, ministers and others, both in the Established Church and among various other denominations of Christians, to propose, that, on the *first Lord's day of June*, it be recommended to such persons to offer up to God their hearty thanks for this glorious event, in their private retirements, and in their respective families. The ministers of the gospel will use their discretion, whether to take notice of it in their public devotions; doubtless, many, of various descriptions, will think it a privilege so to do."

[*Evan. Mag.*

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NOTE (B.) for page 8.

"I congratulate you, fellow citizens, on the approach of the period at which you may interpose your authority, constitutionally, to withdraw the citizens of the United States from all farther participation in those violations of human rights, which have been so long continued on the unoffending inhabitants of Africa; and which the morality, the reputation, and the best interests of our country have long been eager to proscribe. Although no law you may pass can take prohibitory effect, till the first day of the year 1808; yet the intervening period is not too long to prevent, by timely notice, expeditions which cannot be completed before that day."

[*President's Message,*

NOTE (C.) for page 13.

The *Christian Observer*, for February, 1807, thus announces the abolition of this traffic in Great Britain :....“ It is with inexpressible satisfaction that we announce to our readers the issue of the parliamentary discussions on the bill for the abolition of the Slave Trade, which have taken place during the course of the present month. Thank God ! the brand of national reprobation is at length stamped on this monstrous system of legalized iniquity. The final, the irreversible doom of this guilty commerce, is now, we trust, pronounced.

“ The bill for effecting this great measure, after declaring the Slave Trade to be “ contrary to justice, humanity, and sound policy,” proceeds to enact, that from and after the first day of May next, no vessel shall clear out from any port or place under the dominion of his Majesty, for the purpose of carrying slaves ; and that from and after the first of January next, the British Slave Trade shall cease, both on the coast of Africa and in the West Indies.

“ In the House of Lords this bill was read a second time on the 5th instant, on which occasion it received the able and zealous support of Lord *Grenville*, who brought it in ; and who, in a most eloquent and admirable speech of near three hours, laid open the complicated horrors of this detestable system ;—of the Duke of *Gloucester* who, on this question, has pursued a course worthy of a descendant of the House of Brunswick ;—of the Bishop of *Durham*, the Earl of *Selkirk*, the Earl of *Rosslyn*, Earl *Moira*, Lord *Hood*, and Lord *Holland*, who displayed, particularly the last, powers of reasoning, and a generous warmth of feeling, which justly excited the admiration of the House. The opponents of this grand measure of justice and benevolence, were the Duke of *Clarence*, the Earl of *Westmoreland*, Earl *Morton*, Lord *Sidmouth*, Earl *St. Vincent*, and Lord *Eldon*. On the division, the numbers were, for the measure, ONE HUNDRED,—against it, THIRTY-SIX. In its subsequent stages, the bill received the further support of the Bishop of *London*, Earl *Stanhope*, and Earl *Lauderdale*, and the opposition of Lord *Hawkesbury* and Lord *Redesdale*.

“ In the House of Commons the principle of the bill was debated on the 23d inst. when it obtained the sanction of that House, by a majority so large, as to be quite decisive of its fate. The numbers were, for the measure, Two HUNDRED AND EIGHTY THREE,—against it, SIXTEEN ! ! !

“ The debate was opened on this occasion by Lord *Howick*, who with his usual ability pressed the adoption of the Bill on the ground of justice and humanity ; but with a view of meeting objections, and quieting the fears of our colonists, he dwelt chiefly on the policy and prudence of the measure. His Lordship touched on the conformity of the proposed enactment with the general spirit, and with the great precepts of the gospel. Mr. *Fawkes*, the member for Yorkshire, in a forcible speech, main-

tained the same side. He particularly urged the absurdity of supposing that the character of "the Saviour of sinners" could be in any accordance with that of the cruel and profligate slave trader. Sir *John Doyle* employed the weapon of wit in exposing the weak pretences of the opponents of this measure. He apologized for having degraded the profession of a highwayman by a comparison, which he had found it convenient, for the sake of illustration, to institute between that class of men and the man-merchants of Liverpool. In one part of his speech he excited the horror and indignation of the House by a relation of some cruelties of which he had himself been an eye witness. Mr. *Roscoe*, one of the Members of Liverpool, endeavoured to vindicate a large part of his constituents from any participation in this trade of blood. But the most interesting speech on the subject was that of the Solicitor General, Sir *S. Romilly*, who ably and clearly exposed the unmitigated, as well as unprecedented severity of our West Indian system, and urged the Abolition, as the only means of gradually rectifying its enormous evils. A contrast which he drew, towards the conclusion of his speech, between the character of Bonaparte's mind, and that of the beneficent author of this measure, now happily arriving at the height of *his* ambition, produced an almost electric effect on the feelings of the House. Mr. *Wilberforce* closed the debate with his usual eloquence. He was peculiarly animated when he spoke of the elevation of mind, and soundness of principle, which had been shewn in this debate, by the younger Members of the House, and particularly by the young nobility—(Lord *Mahon*, Lord *Milton*, Lord *Percy*, and Mr. *Lushington*, had all spoken with much feeling on the subject.) Indeed the pleasure which we derive from the contemplation of these discussions, in both Houses, is greatly increased by the general recognition of christian principles, which we witnessed in almost all the speakers in favour of the question.

"Nor is it a circumstance to be overlooked, that these debates, so satisfactory from their result, as well as from the high tone of moral and religious feelings, which have distinguished them, should have occurred previously to the day appointed for national humiliation. Now indeed may we indulge the hope that God will regard our fasts : for is not this the fast that he has chosen : "To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burden, to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke ?"

"It is almost superfluous to remind our readers, that our thanks on this occasion are due, in an especial manner, to the great Author of all good, who, in mercy to our land, has inclined the hearts of our rulers to this splendid act of justice and benevolence. And we trust, that, when the measure shall have finally passed, all those throughout the empire, whose feelings on this subject are in unison with our own, will concur in setting apart a day for the purpose of expressing, in a distinct and appropriate manner, their grateful acknowledgments for this blessed, this glorious event.

"Let us not forget, at the same time, our obligations to those who have been instrumental in forwarding this great measure ; to the administration under whose auspices it has been consummated ; to those patriotic individuals who have laboured for twenty years in revealing, in all its dreadful pre-eminence of guilt and misery, that monster, which the legislature has at length consented to crush ; and above them all, to that distinguished person* who has taken the lead in this labour of love, and who, during the whole of his political life, has devoted talents which might have adorned any station however elevated, and which might have secured to him almost the highest objects of human ambition, to the achievement of this magnificent work of beneficence and mercy. But he has his reward. His grateful country will enrol him among her best benefactors. Africa will learn to recognize in him her deliverer from bondage, degradation, and blood. Millions on millions yet unborn will hail his name with joyful acclamations. His own recollections will prove a source of pure enjoyment, in which the happiest of mortals might long to participate. And that gracious Being, who has declared, that even a cup of cold water given in his name shall be rewarded, will not fail to repay, a thousand fold into his bosom, the blessings which he has been the instrument of dispensing with so large a hand to others."

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NOTE (D.) for page 13.

In respect to the Africans still in slavery, we hold it our duty, as christians, to treat them now, as they were treated by the apostles, in the first ages of christianity ; let them remain as they are, and make their condition in that state as comfortable and happy, as possible. The following sentiments of Mr. Paley on this point, I deem correct and excellent.

"Slavery was a part of the civil constitution of most countries, when christianity appeared ; yet no passage is to be found in the christian scriptures, by which it is condemned or prohibited. This is true ; for christianity, soliciting admission into all nations of the world, abstained, as behoved it, from intermeddling with the civil institutions of any. But does it follow, from the silence of scripture concerning them, that all the civil institutions which then prevailed, were right ? or that the bad should not be exchanged for better ?

"Beside this, the discharging of slaves from all obligation to obey their masters, which is the consequence of pronouncing slavery to be unlawful, would have had no better effect, than to let loose one half of mankind upon the other. Slaves would have been tempted to embrace a religion, which asserted their right to freedom. Masters would hardly have been persuaded to consent to claims founded upon such authority. The most calamitous of all contests, a *bellum servile*, might probably have ensued, to the reproach, if not the extinction of the christian name.

* Mr. WILBERFORCE.

"The truth is, the emancipation of slaves should be 'gradual ; and be carried on by provisions of law, and under the protection of civil government. Christianity can only operate as an alterative. By the mild diffusion of its light and influence, the minds of men are insensibly prepared to perceive and correct the enormities, which folly, or wickedness, or accident, have introduced into their public establishments. In this way the *Greek* and *Roman* slavery, and since these, the feudal tyranny, has declined before it. And we trust that, as the knowledge and authority of the same religion advance in the world, they will banish what remains of this odious institution."

[Paley's *Phil. Art. Slavery.*

NOTE (E.) for page 13.

Immediately after the Abolition Act had passed in England, a number of its most active and influential advocates associated for the purpose of prosecuting their work of benevolence, under the name of the AFRICAN INSTITUTION, governed by the following

"RULES AND REGULATIONS.

"THE general objects of the Institution are expressed in the following Resolutions adopted at the first meeting of this Society, on the 14th of April, 1807, viz.

1. "That this meeting is deeply impressed with a sense of the enormous wrongs, which the natives of Africa have suffered in their intercourse with Europe ; and from a desire to repair those wrongs, as well as from general feelings of benevolence, is anxious to adopt such measures, as are best calculated to promote their civilization and happiness.

2. "That the approaching cessation of the Slave Trade hitherto carried on by Great Britain, America, and Denmark, will, in a considerable degree, remove the barrier which has so long obstructed the natural course of social improvement in Africa ; and that the way will be thereby opened for introducing the comforts and arts of a more civilized state of society.

3. "That the happiest effects may be reasonably anticipated from diffusing useful knowledge, and exciting industry among the inhabitants of Africa, and from obtaining and circulating throughout this country more ample and authentic information concerning the agricultural and commercial faculties of that vast continent ; and that through the judicious prosecution of these benevolent endeavours, we may ultimately look forward to the establishment, in the room of that traffic, by which Africa has been so long degraded, of a legitimate and far more extended commerce, beneficial alike to the natives of Africa, and to the manufacturers of Great Britain and Ireland.

4. "That the present period is eminently fitted for prosecuting these benevolent designs ; since the suspension, during the war, of that large share of the Slave Trade, which has commonly been carried on by

France, Spain, and Holland, will, when combined with the effect of the Abolition Laws of Great Britain, America, and Denmark, produce nearly the entire cessation of that traffic along a line of coast extending between two and three thousand miles in length, and thereby afford a peculiarly favourable opportunity for giving a new direction to the industry and commerce of Africa.

5. "That for these purposes a Society be immediately formed to be called

THE AFRICAN INSTITUTION."

Means of effecting the Objects of the Institution.

"To prevent misconception concerning the views and measures of the African Institution, it may be proper in the very first instance to declare, that it is the Society's fixed determination not to undertake any religious missions, and not to engage in commercial speculations. The Society is aware that there already exist several most respectable Institutions formed for the diffusion of Christianity, and means not to encroach on their province. It may also be proper to premise, that it will naturally become the duty and care of this Society, to watch over the execution of the laws, recently enacted in this and other countries, for abolishing the African Slave Trade; to endeavour to prevent the infraction of those laws; and from time to time to suggest any means by which they may be rendered more effectual to their objects; and likewise to endeavour, by communicating information, and by other appropriate methods, to promote the Abolition of the African Slave Trade by foreign powers.

"The means which it is proposed to employ for the purpose of promoting civilization and improvement in Africa are of the following kind.

1. "To collect and diffuse, throughout this country, accurate information respecting the natural productions of Africa, and, in general, respecting the agricultural and commercial capacities of the African Continent, and the intellectual, moral, and political condition of its inhabitants.

2. "To promote the instruction of the Africans in letters and in useful knowledge, and to cultivate a friendly connexion with the natives of that Continent.

3. "To endeavour to enlighten the minds of the Africans with respect to their true interests; and to diffuse information amongst them respecting the means whereby they may improve the present opportunity of substituting a beneficial commerce in place of the slave trade.

4. "To introduce amongst them such of the improvements and useful arts of Europe as are suited to their condition.

"To promote the cultivation of the African soil, not only by exciting and directing the industry of the natives, but by furnishing, where it may appear advantageous to do so, useful seeds and plants, and implements of husbandry.

6. "To introduce amongst the inhabitants beneficial medical discoveries.

7. "To obtain a knowledge of the principal languages of Africa, and, as has already been found to be practicable, to reduce them to writing, with a view to facilitate the diffusion of information among the natives of that country.

8. "To employ suitable agents and to establish correspondences as shall appear advisable, and to encourage and reward individual enterprise and exertion in promoting any of the purposes of the Institution."

Might not similar Institutions be established to advantage in some of the principal cities in the United States ?

Hymn.

I.

HARK ! for 'tis God's own Son that calls
To life and liberty ;
Transported fall before his feet,
Who makes the prisoners free.

II.

The cruel bonds of sin he breaks,
And breaks old Satan's chain ;
Smiling he deals those pardons round,
Which free from endless pain.

III.

Into the captive heart he pours
His Spirit from on high ;
We lose the terrors of the slave,
And *Abba*, Father, cry.

IV.

Shake off your bonds, and sing his grace ;
The sinner's Friend proclaim ;
And call on all around to seek
True freedom by his name.

V.

Walk on at large, till you attain
Your Father's house above :
There shall you wear immortal crowns,
And sing immortal love.

Hymn.

I.

TO Thee, Almighty, gracious power,
Who sit'st, enthron'd, in radiant heaven,
On this bless'd morn, this hallow'd hour,
The homage of the heart be given !

II.

Lift up your souls to God on high,
The fountain of eternal grace,
Who with a tender father's eye
Look'd down on Afric's helpless race !

III.

The nations heard his stern-commands !
Britannia kindly sets us free ;
Columbia tears the galling bands,
And gives the sweets of Liberty.

IV.

Then strike the lyre :—your voices raise !
Let gratitude inspire your song ;
Pursue religion's holy ways,
Shun sinful pleasure's giddy throng.

V.

From Mercy's Seat may grace descend,
To wake contrition's heart-felt sighs ;
O ! may our pious strains ascend
Where ne'er the sainted spirit dies.

VI.

Then, we our freedom shall retain,
In peace, and love, and cheerful toil,
Plenty shall flow from the wide main,
And golden harvests from the soil.

VII.

Ye nations that to us restore
The rights that God bestow'd on all
For you his blessing we implore ;
O ! listen further to his call.

VIII.

From one parental stem ye spring,
A kindred blood your bosoms own.
Your kindred tongues God's praises sing,
And beg forgiveness at his throne.

IX.

O ! then your mutual wrongs forgive,
Unlock your hearts to social love,
So shall ye safe and happy live,
By grace and blessings from above.